

## THE THURSTONS AS MATCHMAKERS

By L. E. CHITTENDEN

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In the hay loft six Thurstons sprawled at ease and wished something would happen.

"Say," said Don excitedly, sitting up, "I know something. You know Mrs. Wilson's nephew, Jim Wilson, who coaches us at football?"

"Yes."

"Well, I heard daddy tell mother that he's fallen in love with Amy Smithers. Did you ever hear of such a silly—a great big fellow like him—love? But he is," continued Don, looking around, with a disgusted air.

"Amy Smithers," said Ted, with the air of a connoisseur, "is the prettiest girl in the town. She's a brick, too, and the best Sunday school teacher I ever had. I intended to marry her myself."

"Well, you can't," continued Don. "nor Mr. Wilson either, for daddy says Mrs. Wilson is awful mad about it on account of Mrs. Smithers being a farmer and talking bass and having whiskers, and Amy's her niece, you see."

"Well, the idea!" said Polly indignantly. "Why, Mrs. Smithers is an awful good woman, and you don't think a bit about her whiskers when you know her."

"Mrs. Smithers is mad, too, and says Mrs. Wilson is a stuck up thing and Amy's not allowed to have anything to do with that crazy Mr. Jim Wilson. Daddy's about niced with hearing both sides and not being able to do a thing about it, and he says he's glad he and mother are going to the synod next week, and he hopes something will happen while he's gone to fix things up. So let's us."

Five Thurstons with renewed interest in life sat up.

"How?" they queried simultaneously.

Then Molly, struck with an idea, said, "Don Thurston, how'd you ever hear all this?"

"Had the toothache the other night and couldn't sleep; so I laid down on the floor beside that drum thing that comes up from the sitting room, and daddy was talking so I couldn't help but hear," said Don.

"You ought to have coughed or something," said Molly severely.

"Never mind," said Polly; "I'm glad it didn't; it's so interesting. Let's think what to do."

"Let's have a dinner party," said Molly, "and ask the bishop to come and Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Smithers and Miss Amy and Mr. Jim, and ask 'em all separate and tell them not to tell any one, but to come and meet the bishop. Then when they're all here we'll have it all dark and Miss Amy and Mr. Jim in the library concealed, and we'll spring the lights on, and nobody'll dare get mad with the bishop there, and they'll all say, 'Heaven bless you, my children.'"

"How can we with mother gone?" asked Polly.

"We'll get Mrs. Flannegan to help, and we'll have it the evening father and mother come home."

"Where'll we get the money?" asked Ted, suddenly developing a practical side.

"We've got a dollar apiece saved for missions; we can use that and save some more for missions," suggested Don.

"This is a kind of mission, I think," said Polly, trying not to wonder what her father would think about it.

With the Thurstons to plan was to act; so Polly and Molly flew to the house for paper to write out their menu. Dummy Dee was to get on his wheel and go over to the bishop's.

The bright spots in the busy, overworked bishop's life were usually supplied by the Thurstons.

So as he was coming out of his door with a pile of letters in his hand his heart cheered within him at the sight of the somewhat ball-like figure of Dummy Dee dismounting in haste from his wheel.

"Oh, bishop, I'm so glad you aren't gone away," began Dummy Dee after they had shaken hands, "because we want to fix something with you. Can you come to a kind of a supper or dinner party at our house next week Thursday?"

"That's the evening I get home from the synod," said the bishop. "I think I can, thank you."

"Father and mother are going too. It will be a surprise. Be sure not to tell them about it at the synod, won't you, bishop?"

And the bishop, scenting mysterious delights from afar, promised faithfully not to divulge the secret nor to forget his own engagement.

So Dummy Dee rode happily away to where the five were struggling with the menu, which seemed never to progress beyond ice cream and fried chicken, with candy interludes.

Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Smithers accepted with the same delight the bishop had shown. They were entirely sure that whatever the Thurstons figured in could be counted on to be wildly exciting as well as original.

Then Mr. Wilson and Miss Amy Smithers were sworn to secrecy and invited.

Mrs. Flannegan was engaged to help about the dinner. She made up in good nature what she lacked in skill, which was considerable.

The day of the feast was a busy one and providentially, they considered, a half holiday from school. Mrs. Wilson sent flowers and after a consultation with the open minded Dummy Dee arranged some matters with her own cook to supply some of Mrs. Flannegan's deficiencies.

A guests, assembling on the evening were met by Dummy Dee, who led

them into the darkened parlor. "There's a chair," he would say, leading them one by one to a haven of safety. "The lights will come on by and by."

And presently, when they all were in the parlor, the Thurstons switched on the lights and waited in various attitudes and places for things to happen. After the guests' eyes had become somewhat accustomed to the change from darkness to dazzling radiance Mrs. Smithers and Mrs. Wilson regarded each other and the exceedingly good looking young couple, to say nothing of the bishop and the bewildered Rev. Mr. Thurston and his wife.

The temperature was growing more and more frigid every moment when in rushed the conspirators' chorus, who had mainly been concealed behind the library doors. "Oh, why don't you say 'Heaven bless you?'" besought Molly in anguished tones. "Dinner's all waiting and getting cold, and if you only knew what a lot of trouble it's been to keep the hot things from getting cold and the cold things from getting hot!"

"What under the sun?" began the Rev. Mr. Thurston. And then, headed by the bishop, they all broke into wild peals of laughter, and you know no one can keep a resentment long alive to the tune of laughter. So by and by, to the delight of the six conspirators, Mrs. Wilson was kissing pretty Amy Smithers and Mrs. Smithers was shaking Jim Wilson's hand.

Then they trooped out to the gayly decorated dining room. The dinner, from soup, oysters, fried chicken, vegetables, to cake, ice cream and coffee, was so much better than poor little Polly and Molly and the boys had expected that they, knowing nothing of the appearance of Mrs. Wilson's cook on the scene arrived to the teeth with hampers, just supposed it was the work of fairies that preside over such scenes and ate with rare enjoyment of every course, with a candy and salted almond interlude between each.

The draw was in his happiest mood and drew out each guest to the best advantage. Mrs. Wilson began to realize the worth of Mrs. Smithers and Mrs. Smithers grew very friendly toward the pretty, soft voiced little lady, while Mr. Jim and Miss Amy spoiled and petted the six children to their hearts' content.

"This is better," said Molly afterward, "than diamonds and shiny clothes in a show."

### A Business Woman in Franklin's Day

An interesting instance of a woman's business ability is given in Franklin's autobiography. In 1773 he founded a printing office in Charleston, S. C., under charge of one of his journeymen, and was to receive one-third of the profits. Franklin says: "He was a man of learning, but ignorant in matters of account, and though he sometimes made me remittances I could get no account from him nor any satisfactory state of our partnership while he lived."

"On his decease the business was continued by his widow, who, being born and bred in Holland, where, as I have been informed, the knowledge of accounts makes a part of female education, she not only sent me as clear a statement as she could find of the transactions past, but continued to account with the greatest regularity and exactness every quarter afterward and managed the business with such success that she not only reputably brought up a family of children, but at the expiration of the term was able to purchase of me the printing house and establish her son in it. I mention this affair chiefly for the sake of recommending that branch of education for our young women as likely to be of more use to them and their children, in case of widowhood, than either music or dancing."

### Grain in Wood.

Three kinds of structures are evident in the twig of a year or two's growth. An irregular mass of pith is in the center, which in time grows less and ultimately disappears. Outside this are a sheath and a layer of hard cellular tissue, which from the very first presents a radiating structure, the beginning of the medullary rays, called by carpenters the silver grain. Outside this again is a layer of cambium, the growth for new wood.

A clearly traced dark line intersects all these radii at right angles and marks off the growth of each year, large or small, according to the season. This is the ring whereby in cross section the age of the tree, when felled, is reckoned. Different kinds of timber show the grain in differing degrees. In oak the grain is very conspicuous; in the beech, plane and maple it is very marked, but of smaller size; in others it is scarcely seen by the eye, but always under the microscope. In all tropical woods, such as mahogany, this structure is very obscure.

### Town and Country.

The distinction between town and country, between natural and artificial life, is of course, as we all know, a very arbitrary one. The highly complicated and seemingly artificial life which we now lead is an absolutely natural condition of existence, as natural as the life of a colony of beavers in one of their dams on a Canadian river or of a nation of ants at work in the garden. Evolution directs the forces of nature in the building of the beavers' houses, in the construction of birds' nests and in the building of the king's palace. There is no natural difference between a leaf carried by a murmuring stream over transparent depths full of sunshine, under dark tunnels of overhanging foliage, and a human wait whirling in a human stream over muddy pavements. As the great ocean itself is but a single drop in the immensity of creation, so London, overgrown as it is, is but an ant's nest in the surrounding country.

—Marcus Reed in Macmillan's.

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